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WALL DECORATION.

By M. H. BIRGE & SONS.



THE rapidity with which the novelties brought out by M. H. Birge & Sons are taken up by the trade, proves that these manufacturers know how to hit upon just what is wanted by house decorators generally. The singular softness and subtle elaboration of their productions command the highest admiration, the treatment being in effect the very opposite of the hard look of much wall paper printing.

The main object of these manufacturers is to

provide a first-class eclectic set of patterns from which the decorator or furnisher may at once satisfy demands in any style. To illustrate this we cannot do better than show an interior decorated with one of their new patterns of paper-hangings for the season of 1895. The ornament is in the style of a stripe, with what is known to the trade as a "Crown" frieze, which finishes off the paper at the top so as to produce the effect of one continuous pattern. The illustration shows the pattern only, but does not give an idea of the coloring. We were shown a number of styles of this combination—one particularly graceful was a dark blue stripe on a cream white ground, with a floral ornament in stripe in white and pink flowers with green leaves. The whole combination is very new and original, and fits beautifully the modern style of furnishings known as the now popular "Colonial" style. The woodwork is in ivory white, and the moulding at angle of ceiling is in the same ivory tone picked out with gold.

Decoration and furnishing more than ever go hand in hand, and the demand is for delicate and restful combinations such as we illustrate.

WALL-PAPERS AND STENCILLING IN ENGLAND.

By T. R. SPENCE.

THE first record of the manufacture of paper-hangings in England dates from the year 1692, as a patent was taken out at that date by a William Bayley, who stated that his invention consisted of "several engines made of brass," for the printing of all sorts of paper, of all sorts of figures and colors whatsoever, and that "the said invention had not been heretofore known or practiced by any of our subjects." There is no doubt the first attempts were the imitation of tapestry, linen, or other hangings that were at that time fashionable. In the reign of Queen Anne, 1712, a duty was imposed on paper-hangings. They were made on pieces, sixteen to twenty four sheets, forming about eight square yards; each

sheet bore the government stamp; the duty was $1\frac{3}{4}$ d. per square yard. Paper stainers were required to pay an annual license of £4.

In the reign of Queen Anne, paper hangings were imported from China. Probably the first idea of their manufacture here was suggested by these importations. In 1746, larger blocks were used for wall paper printings, some two yards long, made from light material, but these were soon found unsuitable, and were replaced by heavier and shorter blocks.

In 1753, Edward Deighton used engraved metal plates in a rolling mill. The designs were afterwards colored by hand; gilding of parts was also introduced by him—doubtless suggested by the gilded leathers used in the 16th century—for wall covering. A man named Jackson about this time made and sold papers in imitation of statues, landscapes, etc., and quaintly remarks that "the persons who cannot purchase the statues themselves may have these prints in their places, and thus effectually shows his taste."

Whether his cheap antiques "caught on" I am unable to say. In a work printed by J. Nourse, in 1764, it is stated that there were three methods in use, namely, printing in colors, using the stencil, and painting with a pencil or brush.

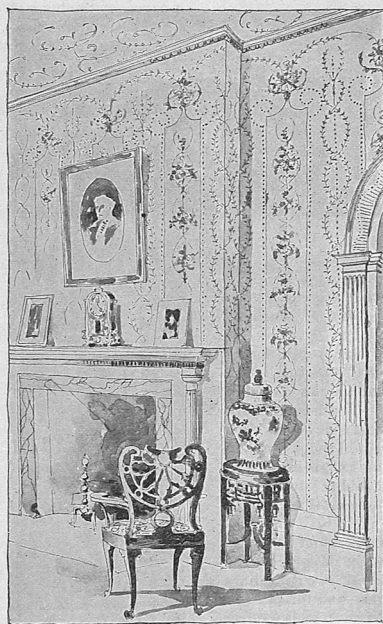
These processes are described at some length, and approached the block printing now in use. Stenciling was found to be cheaper, but not so sharp as blocks. The pencil was used for finishing and adding further details. Flock printing was also described as giving faithful imitations of silks, velvet, damask, etc. A piece of paper was taken off the walls of a mansion near Whitehaven in 1786; it was asserted that it had been there for about two hundred years. Its thickness was that of card-board, and the ornament had been stenciled and afterwards finished by hand.

Sherringham, of London, in 1786, as the result of journeys to the Continent, made great advances in the art of paper staining.

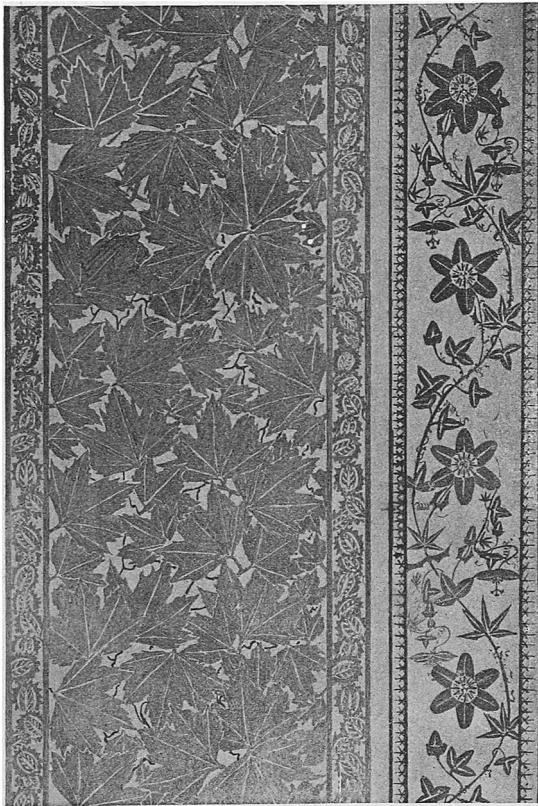
Anthony G. Eckhardt, in 1792, made papers from engraved copper plates, and decorated them with silver and gold leaf. This gilding was the invention of John Hautch, of Nuremberg, about the middle of the 17th century. It was a preparation of tin and copper, and is now commonly known by the name of Dutch metal. Eckhardt also printed on stiffened linen, finishing by gilding and varnishing. He employed artists of considerable skill.

In 1796, G. T. Hawcock was the first to introduce embossed paper.

In the picture galleries at Hampton Court Palace are the remains of wall-papers which are asserted to date from the time of Charles I. There are, or were, some old flock papers on the walls of King William's bedroom, dressing room and writing room. The date of their production I cannot state. They may not be very old, as the patterns are like the patterns used fifty years ago. Paper-hangings fifty years ago were made of several sheets, 23x28, fixed together in lengths of twelve yards. Lewis Robert, a French workman, in 1799 made a machine for producing paper in endless pieces; and in 1803 John Gamble obtained a



WALL DECORATION IN PAPER-HANGINGS FROM THE NEW PATTERNS OF M. H. BIRGE & SONS, FOR SEASON OF 1895.



STRIPED DESIGN IN WALL-PAPER.

patent in England for making paper in endless sheets.

In 1886 the reduction of the duty gave a great impetus to wall-paper manufacture, with the result that their use was very much increased. In 1861 the duty was altogether abolished.

The first process in wall-paper manufacture is the preparation of the design. This, as a rule, is sketched out roughly, sometimes on a small scale, but more frequently plotted out to the actual size necessary for the rollers or blocks in which it is to be cut. The usual area for roller printing is 21 in.x21 in.; block printing gives a more extended surface, varying from 21 in.x24 in. to 24 in.x36in. On these areas the artist has to express himself as best he may, for the design must necessarily repeat itself correctly in these spaces. Should the designer be dowered with redundant imagery, these inexorable limitations become a tyranny and a chilling frost on his dreams.

It is well to work on a piece of paper 6 in. larger all round than your 21 in.x21 in. In the middle of this allotted space the design may be roughly sketched, running out certain large general sweeping lines across and into the outer spaces. The general purpose and direction of such the designer will have in his mind's eye, and if he is a fairly skillful draughtsman, he may come very near the correct points on the edge of the space necessary for the repetition of his pattern. Unless the designer's conception first live in his mental vision, it will not come by any fishing process, or without previous thought or creation.

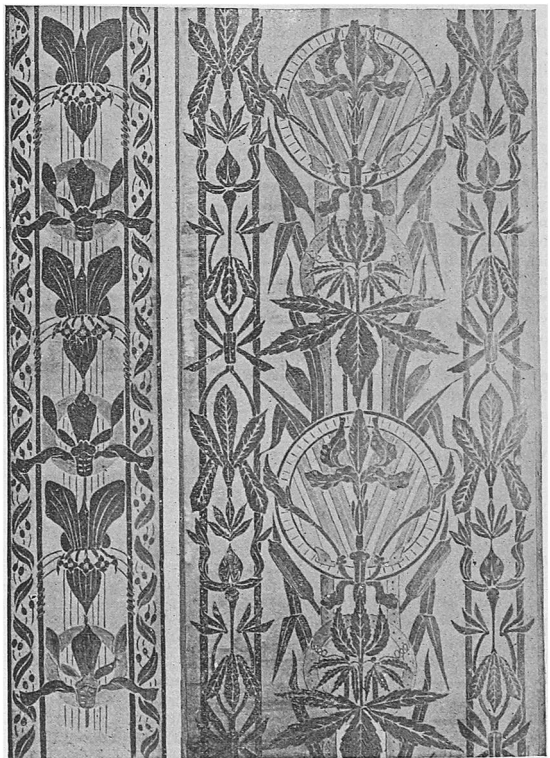
This rough design is roughly traced and placed at the sides, top, and bottom, so that the curves or other detail shall work out the correct repetition of the pattern. There are certain rules for working out in geometric patterns, but they are too complicated for present description. Some prefer to get the pattern in somewhat of a muddle, as the process of unraveling stimulates mental effort and invention—to fill up undeveloped spaces—thus obtaining more interest and thought in the detail.

When the whole design is complete in outline, it is transferred to a sheet of paper of the tint that is to predominate in your color scheme; on this are laid the various colors in distemper as shall be used for subsequent printing. The design is carefully traced and transferred to rollers or blocks, which are destined to print the pattern on the paper. These rollers have to be prepared with great care, and to be of thoroughly seasoned sycamore. All outlines of flowers, grounds, etc., are formed by driving into the wood, up to a gauge, copper slips, and the intervening spaces filled with felt, thus forming the printing surfaces. Sometimes the rollers are covered with paper one-eighth inch thick, and the copper slips are hammered through into the wood, the paper acting as gauge. The paper is picked out and the spaces fitted with felt. The copper bordering keeps the whole design sharp and permanent. The edges formed by the incised printing pattern, if of wood only, soon become ragged and worn.

Each color requires a separate roller, and when attempts are made to imitate the colors and gradations of natural flowers, it is no uncommon thing to have twenty separate rollers.

The enormous cost of cutting twenty rollers for the printing of one paper should be the means of opening our eyes to the fact that, if wall-papers are to conform to the best traditions of decorative art, such a multiplicity of tints can never be satisfactory. All fine decoration is simple, and of a limited scale of tints and gradations. Manufacturers now, in employing designers, generally stipulate a limited number of printings, on the score of expense of production. They thus, shall I say unconsciously, are furthering the best decorative ends, remembering that wall-paper is an adjunct, within the reach of moderate means only, not the whole end and ideal of decorative art.

For roller printing, the rollers are very accurately mounted on a large revolving cylinder, the latest type of cylinder being capable of carrying sixteen printing rollers, thus, at each revolution, turning out a paper containing sixteen printings. The paper is first carried from a small supply machine, which regulates the supply and tension of the material against the rollers, these being supplied with the necessary



STRIPED DESIGN IN WALL-PAPER.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

printing tints from an endless blanket roller, revolving through troughs of color. When the paper has received its printed pattern, it still further travels over a succession of rollers, through the drying-room; when perfectly dry, it is transferred to a machine, for cutting into lengths of twelve yards. A machine carrying two rollers produces paper at the rate of about four miles an hour.

whole work has an infinitely joyous and hopeful quality. This is equally true of the winged groups, which are in delightful contrast to the familiar and hackneyed types that serve to represent Virtue, Sacrifice, Charity, and other abstract entities, which sculptors have personified time out of mind, by large, heavy, dull looking, stone women.



THE "JASMINE" WALL-PAPER, BY JEFFREYS & CO.



SEED AND FLOWER DESIGN, BY WALTER CRANE.

DECORATIVE NOTE.

THE group represented in the pediment of the Woman's Building, Chicago, typifies woman's work in the various walks of life. The central figure is full of spirit and charm, in one hand she holds a myrtle wreath; in the other the scales of justice. On her right we find Woman the Benefactor; and on her left the Woman, the Artist and Litterateur. The figures are modeled in very high relief and the

NEW WALL PAPERS, BY H. BARTHOLOMAE & CO.

BY THE EDITOR.



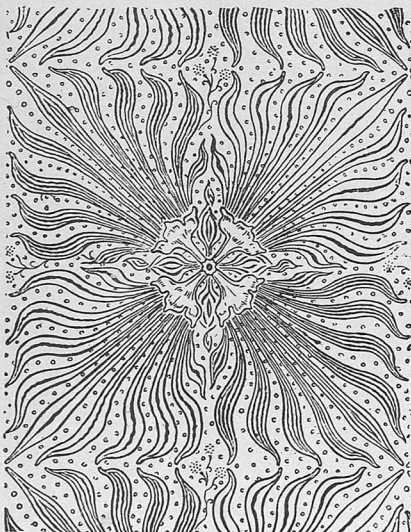
HERE is undoubtedly a growing feeling for art on the part of the American people fostered by indefatigable workers in all branches of industrial art, but in no department is the advance so conspicuous as in that of high art wall-papers. Among the firms who have been mainly instrumental in educating the public and, indeed, the art world also, to a proper appreciation of the true position occupied by wall-papers in the decoration of the house, H. Bartholomae & Co., are in the highest rank, and it was with no small amount of pleasure that we inspected a few days ago their new season's line of hand-made goods.

To speak of special effects, some suprisingly novel designs have been prepared in a grade of goods special to the firm and known as

"DROP CORNICE" DESIGNS

enriched with another specialty, viz.: "Appliqué Relief." We are glad to observe that the system that has hitherto prevailed of abruptly cutting short the wall-paper repeat by the picture moulding, or frieze, is being rapidly relegated to the limbo of decay by the introduction of more organic designs, in which every element of the pattern is exhibited unmutated upon the wall surface. Every repeat of the patterns, whether upright or lateral, possesses its own axis of symmetry and, whether the design is purely geometrical or purely organic, it more resembles a mural painting specially designed for its position, than an irresponsible geometrical repeat.

The "American" design in this category is an exceedingly beautiful example of this method of wall decoration. The space usually occupied by the frieze is filled with an elaborate repeat, usually of large proportions, in which is concentrated all the glory of form and color known to the modern decorator. The arrangement consists of a complex interlacement of light and airy scrolls and garlands of pearls with



THE "JUNO" CEILING DESIGN, BY WALTER CRANE.